

Andrew Jackson to Aaron V. Brown, February 9, 1843, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

class=MsoNormal>TO AARON V. BROWN. 1

1 Library of Congress, Donelson Papers. This letter was published in the Globe , in a much altered form. Whether the changes were made by him who wrote the fair copy following the draft here given, or by Francis P. Blair, the editor of the Globe , is not known. The letter is in Niles' Register , LXVI. 70.

Hermitage, February 9 [12], 1843.

D'r sir, yours of the 23rd ult. has been received, and with it the Madisonia[n] containing Gov. Gilmors letter on the subject of the annecsation of Texas to the U. States, 2 and requesting to know whether it meets my views. It is a just maxim, that acts speaks louder than words. not long after I entered on the duties of President of the United [States] in 1829, It was made known to me by Mr. Ervin, 3 formerly our minister at the Court of Madrid, that whilst at that Court, he had negotiated a treaty with spain thro her minister for the cession of the Floridas, and the settlement of the boundery of Louisiana, on the same terms that florida was afterwards ceded to the United States, and fixing the boundery of Louisiana, its ancient limits, the river Rio Grand, that he had wrote home to our Government for powers, to sign, and complete this negotiation. instead of the Executive sending the authority requested, the negotiation was changed to Washington and the bounds of Louisiana the Sabine river. Mr. Ervin, placed in my hands all the correspondence and finding his report true from the documents submitted, and that the government, (from what cause I never could conjecture) had, when by negotiation spain had agreed to establish the ancient boundery of Louisiana on its west, the Rio Grand, that

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instead of sending the requested power to our minister at Madrid, ordered the negotiation to Washington, and there by treaty, gave up the whole country now and established the west boundary of Louisiana at the Sabine instead of the Rio Grand.

2 In the *Madisonian* of Jan. 23, 1843, letter of Thomas W. Gilmer of Va., Jan. 10, reprinted from the *Baltimore Republican*.

3 George W. Erving, minister to Spain 1814–1819. He did not speak in the controversy now impending. Jackson however repeated several times the charge that Erving showed him papers to prove that he, Erving, while Monroe was President, had negotiated a treaty with Spain by which Texas was secured to the United States, and that the matter was taken out of his hands by Adams, Secretary of State, who made the treaty of 1819 with the Sabine for boundary. Adams denied the assertion and declared that Erving was not a truthful man. See *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, VIII, 464, XII. 42, 52, 63, 74, 77, 82, 84, 88, 93, 101, 123, 146. In vol. IV., p. 239, Adams records Jackson's approval of the Sabine boundary in conversation on Feb. 3, 1819.

Being astonished at this surrender of our right obtained from France, and acknowledged and about to be sanctioned by Spain by treaty if the authority asked had been sent, filled me with regret and astonishment and being of the same feeling of the ancient Romans, never to cede any land or boundary of the Republic, but to add to it by treaty extending the area for freedom, on the appointment of a minister I forthwith gave our minister at Mexico, instructions to enter upon a negotiation for the retrocession of Texas to the United States, that is to say to the Rio Grand river; for which he was authorised to give five millions of dollars. The negotiation failed, and I regretted this much, as I viewed, and still view the Texas of the utmost importance to the safety of the U. States, 0226 202 and particularly to the safety of New Orleans, and I have often wondered, how it happened, that this part of Louisiana was given up to Spain so essential to the protection of New Orleans, when Spain had agreed with our minister at Madrid, to resign all Louisiana once to the Rio Grand and surrender Florida with it, for the sum afterwards taken from Florida. I never could see why

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Texas was quietly surrendered to Spain by the negotiation at Washington unless it was the jealousy of the rising greatness of the south and west, and the fear of losing the political ascendancy in the north.

I have said that Texas was, and I say now is all important to the safety and protection of New Orleans. Texas is an independent Republic—Great Britain has made treaties with her and acknowledged her independence. Great Britain keeps the north western boundary as a peg to declare war against us, whenever she may find to her interest to do so, or when the northeastern boundary was about to be settled she would have extended to the Northwest. Great Britain enters into an alliance with Texas—looking forward to war with us, she sends to Texas 20 or 30,000, organising her army near to the Sabine, when furnished with all supplies, and equipt for active service, she declares war against us, marches thro Louisiana and Arkansas, makes a lodgment on the Mississippi, excite the negroes to insurrection, the lower country falls and with it New Orleans, and a servile war rages all over the southern and western country. In the mean time Great Britain moves an army from Canada, along our western frontier to cooperate with the army from Texas. What mischief and havoc would be inflicted upon us before we could organise an army to repel this aggression.

Texas is altogether important to the safety of the north west. Texas borders upon us on our west, to the 42nd. degree of north latitude becomes our southern boundary to the Pacific. Texas settled to the Rio Grand and up to our southern boundary and along that to the Pacific, would make [make us] invulnerable from a combination of the whole European world against us, and our population to the Pacific, would give protection to all our Eastern Whalers, and open ports upon the Pacific for them to prepare their oil and cure their fish. I have in every way that I could look at the subject viewed that part of Louisiana, now Texas, as very important to the safety of the United States—as well as the immense quantity of fine ship timber it possesses, as well as the vast importance its possession

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by the united States to the safety of Neworleans and our south western possession. My debiltiy is too great to follow the subject further. A J.

From the Rio Grand, over land a large army could not march or be supplied, unless from the Gulph by water, which by vigilence could allways be interrupted, and to march an army near the Gulph, they could be by militia harrassed, and detained until an organised force could be raised to meet them—A. J.